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Trustee shaken as report delayed

By **TIM WHITNELL**
Special to The Champion

Anise Docherty is incensed by a delay to her proposal that administration look into the feasibility of selling or leasing the Halton Board of Education's building.

The Oakville trustee, visibly upset, apologized to the assembled spectators and left before the end of last week's regular board meeting following the passage of an amended version of her motion.

A red-faced Ms Docherty denounced the decision by a majority of trustees to push

back, to next June 26, the date to receive a report from administration. The report will include an appraisal of the J.W. Singleton Education Centre on Guelph Line and also conduct a study to determine the possibility of moving existing board facilities and functions to other sites within the region.

"It's insulting to the public," Ms Docherty said of the decision by her fellow trustees to put off receiving the study for six months, since the board will deal with school closure items within the next three weeks.

Her strong point of view garnered an ally in Oakville's

Debbie Marklew. "It's ridiculous to wait until June 26," said the trustee. "Delegation after delegation has told us to look at (selling) the Singleton Centre."

Ms Docherty told trustees the board office and surrounding property is currently zoned for residential use and, as such, could fetch around \$250,000 an acre. If it was zoned commercial, it could reap double that amount, she said. She estimated 4-6 acres might be available to sell, making the property worth anywhere from \$1-4 million, she contended.

"The Oakville trustee believes the board should act as soon as possible on the issue.

"I believe issues of accommodation with the J.W. Singleton Centre are part and parcel of the Accommodation study," looking at the possible closure of 11 board properties, said Ms

Docherty. Ms Docherty had asked for a Dec. 1 deadline for the study to be brought back to the board, but that met with vehement opposition from other trustees, the director of education and a superintendent.

"To me it looks like hundreds of man hours of work," remarked Vice-Chair Penny Siebert, who suggested a June, 1997, deadline for the study.

Gerry Cullen, superintendent of facilities for the board, concurred with Ms Siebert. "There is no time between now and Dec. 19," he said, referring to the schedule for debate and decisions on Renewal. "This is not a small item. My estimation puts us beyond the February date.

Burlington Trustee Cheryl Craig had earlier suggested a compromise amendment of Feb. 13 as a report deadline.

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School trustees taking a pay cut

By **CAROL BALDWIN**
Special to The Champion

The Halton Roman Catholic School Board voted itself a 5 per cent cut in pay at last week's board meeting.

Burlington Trustee James Sherlock made the motion that suggested the trustees' honorarium be reduced, noting that the dollar amount would be "not even a petty cash spill," but would serve as an example.

Commenting on the reduction the following day, Donald Schrenk, the chair-elect, said, "In Halton it is so small, it doesn't have a significant impact in dollars and cents. The savings are minimal. It's a small percentage, but it indicates that the trustees are cognizant of the restraint that's out there."

Mr. Schrenk said he hoped the gesture would not only show that the trustees were trying to grapple with the reality of today's economic climate, but would also portray them in a more favourable light.

"All trustees have been tarred with the same brush of making too much money and doing too little," he said.

For 1997, the trustees' honorarium will be \$11,859.48 and \$17,789.22 for the chair.

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